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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) Many Army officers do not receive formal instruction in the particularities of the Army civilian personnel management system. This leaves them ill-prepared to serve as managers, leaders, and mentors for approximately 270,000 Department of the Army Civilians (DACs) who serve alongside active Army members. We confirmed our thesis through interviews with students at the U.S. Army War College, senior DACs attending the Senior Executive Fellows Program at Harvard University, and other civilian Army leaders at U.S. Army Materiel Command. Additionally, a 1986 Department of the Army Inspector General Report documented similar problems. Although there have been changes since 1986 in the civilian personnel management system, the fundamental problem, Army officers who do not understand the rules governing their civilian employees, remains. Using Peter Senge's book, <u>The Fifth Discipline</u> , as the framework for analysis, this paper sorts through the personnel management changes currently underway, addresses the shortcomings of those solutions in solving the fundamental problem, and suggests the fundamental solution: integrated civilian and military personnel systems which simplify the task of leading for both civilian and military leaders by "putting everyone on the same sheet of music."				
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# **Military Leadership of Civilian Personnel:**

## **Achieving a Balance**

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**National Security Program  
John F. Kennedy School of Government  
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2 May 1996

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Unless otherwise stated,  
whenever the masculine gender is used,  
both men and women are included.

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## **Executive Summary**

**Problem:** Currently the Department of the Army (DA) employs approximately 270,000 Army civilians. Most Army civilians work in Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) organizations headed by Army officers. In the past, Army officers rarely received training in how to lead and manage civilian employees. Because most Army officers do not understand the civilian personnel management system, which is very different from the military system, they are often unable to manage and lead or mentor Army civilians effectively. This can lead to poor morale, a poorly trained civilian work force, and other inefficiencies in Army organizations.

**Background:** Efficient military management of civilians in the DA work force is necessary because: civilian employees make up one-third of the DA work force and consume over twenty-one percent of the Army budget. September 1994 figures indicate that 48% of captains and 68% of majors were assigned to TDA organizations likely to have civilian employees. These figures included combat arms, combat support, and combat service support officers. Finally, the issue of leading and caring for civilians becomes increasingly important as the need to deploy civilians with combat forces continues to grow.

These problems are not new. A 1986 Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG) report said, "Most military leaders are failing to provide needed leadership to the civilian work force." Six years later, the Civilian Leadership Development Plan stated, "there is a need to enhance the military's ability to lead and care for civilians." After ten years of effort in DA to address these issues, interviews with staff members at various government agencies and civilian and military students at senior service colleges indicate that many areas still need improvement.

We reviewed current theories of organizational behavior to find ideas for better integration of civilian and military components of the Department of the Army work force. To

reduce bias among this all-military research team and to provide a fresh outlook on these issues, we conducted interviews with academic experts to obtain a nonmilitary perspective and possible solutions.

**Findings:** The major problems are: real and perceived inequities between military and civilian personnel systems, e.g., compensation, education, and discipline, that can lead to we/they attitudes; and military leaders who do not understand the rules governing their civilian employees.

One major cause of these problems is that the two personnel systems governing military and civilians are designed to be different. Different personnel systems alone are not a major impediment to progress, but real and perceived inequities because of the different systems can cause grave problems when the organization's military leadership does not know the rules and cannot explain the reasons for the differences. For example, civilian employees who leave when their eight-hour workdays are over are sometimes perceived by the military as "clock watchers" because they seem unwilling to work the same hours as their military counterparts. In fact, if those civilians stayed beyond their forty hours per week, the commander would be obligated to pay overtime or compensatory time, both of which mount up quickly in terms of dollars. The commander who does not understand the situation and did not budget properly for overtime can sabotage his finances expecting equal time from military and civilian employees. He is also at a loss to explain the difference to his soldiers.

**Solution:** Just as the issues are complex, so are the solutions. The Army has tried to fix some of the shortcomings, but problems remain. We researched changes since 1986, and while we found some progress in revising the civilian personnel system, we feel much remains to be done in teaching officers to lead, care for, and mentor civilian employees.



Our analysis of the changes that have already taken place, and our recommendations for the future, are based on Peter M. Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*. In Senge's terms, the Army has implemented a series of symptomatic solutions which address only the symptoms of a problem, not the fundamental causes.

Symptomatic solutions tend to focus on only a piece of the overall problem; they yield short-term benefits at best, and they produce side effects which tend to complicate the overall issue and make the fundamental solution even more difficult to see. Fundamental solutions, on the other hand, address the entire system and the fundamental causes of the problem.

For example, a symptomatic solution to officers who do not understand the civilian personnel system is to educate the officer about the civilian system. Unfortunately, this solution comes with the side effect of having to create time in the already full curriculum at Army schools for a new subject. This can only happen if some heretofore required instruction is deleted from the course. Obviously, that means the officer does not learn something he probably should know in order to learn the civilian personnel system. A better solution -- the fundamental solution -- is to develop functionally and operationally integrated military and civilian personnel systems which preserve the necessary differences, such as union membership for civilians, at the same time that performance evaluations, educational opportunities, compensation, etc., are made more similar. This facilitates the officer's understanding of the system, because it is like his own. He no longer needs extensive extra instruction on a strange system; he only needs fine tuning on a system he already knows.

The typical reaction to a call for such fundamental changes to the personnel systems is disbelief. We were told by many that our recommendations were "a bridge too far." We disagree. Not only is this attitude contrary to the traditional American optimism that tomorrow

will be a better day, but it overlooks the legal provision for testing new methods which exists in Section 1101 of Title 5, U.S. Code permitting operational demonstration projects to test ultimately widespread revisions on a smaller test group. Our recommendations should be tested as a demonstration project.

**To ensure the maximum commonality between uniformed and civilian subcultures, we recommend the following long-term fundamental solutions:**

- Create functionally and operationally integrated military/civilian personnel management systems.
- Centralize and standardize selection, funding, and measurement of civilian education.
- Make GS-7 through 15 employees straight salary employees; centralize civilian pay at DA level.

**To implement our fundamental solutions, Chief of Staff Army should:**

- Direct a DAIG relook to officially assess the current status of civilian personnel management and progress on the 1986 DAIG recommendations.
- Appoint a General Officer Steering Committee to oversee the establishment of a demonstration project to design and implement integrated military and civilian personnel management systems which lead to the fundamental solutions we proposed.
- Continue the following on-going symptomatic solutions until the fundamental solutions are in place:
  - Integrate civilian personnel management into officer education at all levels.
  - Capitalize on officers' previous experience in leading civilians through repeat assignments to highly civilianized organizations.
  - Create state of the art self-development courses and motivate officers to seek self-development in leading civilians.
  - Appoint a Senior Civilian Advisor.
  - Add civilian awareness to the DA Special Emphasis Program.

**To maximize effective leadership, management, and mentoring of civilian employees local leaders must:**

- Motivate young officers to learn about civilian personnel management.
- Evaluate officers' ability to lead/manage their entire work force on Officer Evaluation Reports and through Command Inspection Programs.
- Properly select, schedule, and fund civilian training.
- Reward exceptional civilian performance.
- Execute timely evaluations of civilian employees.

## **Chapter 1. Military Supervision of Civilians: A Recurring Problem**

We began this paper because our combined experience over twenty-year careers included a number of incidents where, as military supervisors of Department of the Army civilians (DACs), we were frustrated in our efforts to supervise, lead, and mentor our civilian employees. We found that (1) the leadership techniques we learned dealing with soldiers did not always work with civilians, and (2) we did not understand the very intricate set of policies, regulations, and legislation that governs civilian personnel management.

### **Thesis**

We asked ourselves why the Department of the Army employs about 270,000 DACs,<sup>1</sup> most of whom work in echelons above corps organizations headed by Army officers, yet the officers heading those organizations rarely received training in how to lead and manage civilian employees. We hypothesized that this lack of training left Army officers unable to mentor or lead and manage their DACs effectively because they do not understand the personnel management system that governs their civilian employees. This, we felt, could lead to low morale, a poorly trained civilian work force, and other inefficiencies in Army organizations.

Some brief examples from our experience will clarify the situations we faced. As Army leaders, we were taught that it is important to know one's subordinates. Indeed, taking care of a soldier's family is as important as taking care of the soldier himself. Consequently, every good military supervisor knows which of his soldiers are married, which are single, who just had a baby, who has serious medical problems in the family, etc. Yet, when a military commander began asking his civilian employees for similar information, the employees complained that he violated their privacy.

Similarly, we learned very quickly the difference between commanding and cajoling. Although Army leaders are taught to include subordinates in the information flow so that good ideas come up the chain, and decisions and the rationale for those decisions are communicated down the chain, the military is not, generally, a participatory democracy. However, some civilian employees did not hesitate to express disagreement with our decisions, sometimes publicly, and insisted on expressing their own views on how things should be run. As military officers, we were unaccustomed to public opposition from subordinates once we had made a decision.

A lack of familiarity with the rules governing civilians led to some pretty interesting scenarios, such as the civilian who was informed along with the rest of the staff that his office must move from one location to another. Unfortunately for the military supervisor, the notification of the move did not take place ten working days before the move started, as required by local civilian policy. The employee allowed the move to begin and progress all the way to his new work area before he announced he was going to file a grievance because of the lack of adequate notification of the move.

## **Methodology**

We decided to see if our experiences were unique, or if other officers had experienced similar problems, if the DACs themselves felt military supervisors were a problem, and if we could document the problems and recommend solutions to remedy them. In order to simplify the issue, we decided to consider only appropriated fund GS-7 through GS-15 DACs serving in the continental United States (CONUS). GS-7 through GS-15 employees are the professional equivalent of officers -- lieutenants through colonels. We confined the discussion to CONUS to

avoid the additional complexity of special pay and allowances and special personnel categories for civilians overseas.

We conducted a comprehensive review of current literature, including, but not limited to, Department of the Army Inspector General (DAIG) reports, Army Research Institute surveys, the Civilian Leader Development Action Plan, various Officer Leader Development Action Plans, and Army Force XXI literature. This review provided an in-depth assessment of what had been done in the past as well as a road map of what to consider for the future.

One of our most important findings was a 1986 DAIG Report on a special inspection conducted from April to December 1985 "to assess the overall effectiveness of U. S. Army civilian personnel management [CPM] policies and practices."<sup>2</sup> The Inspector General's cover memorandum continues by listing the inspection results:

The inspection revealed an ineffective and inefficient system clogged in a complex maze of laws and regulations ... Most military leaders are failing to provide needed leadership to the civilian work force. Communications at all levels within the system require strengthening. The most significant finding is that the CPM system is overburdened by complexity....

... Army leaders are failing to provide effective leadership to ... Army civilians. Commanders and military leaders do not understand the civilian personnel system ....[B]ecause of the complexity, most would prefer not to deal with it. Education of the military ... on the civilian personnel system and the leading of civilians is lacking. Additionally, military leaders are seldom held accountable for their failures in managing civilian personnel. Their concern is primarily for the soldier, not the civilian member of the Army Team.

Complexity fosters a breakdown in communications affecting all levels from the senior commander to the most junior employee, including CPO [Civilian Personnel Office] personnel. Few commanders, supervisors, or employees understand the personnel system....

The inspection did reveal ... the work force is composed of hard working, dedicated civilians. Also, DCSPER [Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel] has proposed limited legislation to change some parts of the system and a few installations had initiated procedures to reduce some of the complexity impact.

The problems uncovered in this inspection are not new. They have been documented in numerous reports, but have not yet been solved.... An innovative approach ... is needed. The savings from a new, simple, and effective system would be substantial.

... Recommend that the Chief of Staff activate an action group, under the leadership of a general officer, chartered to coordinate the design of a new system.... [T]he action group should coordinate the implementation of those short term changes which will enhance, but not further complicate, the current civilian personnel system. Over the long term, the action group should lead the development, testing, and implementation of a significantly improved Army civilian personnel management system that is responsive to the Army's mission.<sup>3</sup>

To our surprise, this ten-year-old DAIG Report documented the same kind of problems we had observed as recently as 1990-95. Were we the only people who thought these problems still existed, or did other DA employees, military and civilian, feel the same way?

In order to find out, we interviewed Army officers about their experiences in supervising civilians and talked to senior civilians about their observations of military supervisors. We talked to staff members at the U.S. Army Material Command, the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civilian Personnel Policy, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Additionally, we reviewed current theories of organizational behavior to find ideas for better integration of civilian and military components of the Department of the Army work force. To reduce bias among this all-military research team and to provide a fresh outlook on these issues, we conducted interviews with academic experts to obtain a nonmilitary perspective and possible solutions.

At the end of the research, we found that the major problems that military managers must address have not changed much since 1986. They are: real and perceived inequities between military and civilian personnel systems, e.g., compensation, education, and discipline, that can lead to we/they attitudes; and military leaders who do not understand the rules governing their civilian employees.

We researched changes that had occurred since 1986, and while we found some progress had been made in revising the civilian personnel system (see Chapter 4), we feel much remains to be done in teaching officers to lead, care for, and mentor civilian employees. We formulated a series of prescriptive recommendations for Army leadership to implement with the goal of enhancing internal Army civilian-military relations. Our analysis of the changes that have already taken place since 1986 and our recommendations for the future are based on the work of Peter M. Senge, Director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT's Sloan School of Management. His ideas appear in his book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*.

Finally, we travelled to selected proponent agencies to conduct a feasibility assessment of our ideas. We incorporated the agencies' constructive comments into our final recommendations.

## **Importance**

Efficient military management of civilians in the DA work force is vital for several reasons. In the first place, civilian

employees make up one-third of the work force and civilian pay and allowances consume over 21% of the Army budget.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, as the drawdown of military

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**Civilian employees make up one-third of the work force and civilian pay and allowances consume over twenty-one percent of the Army budget .... civilians will be used increasingly in green suit jobs.**

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in the Army proceeds, civilians will be used increasingly in traditionally green suit jobs. As the largest Army employer of civilians, the U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC), data shows a decline in the fiscal years (FY) 1989-97 from 8,937 military to 3,004, a 66% decrease, while during the same period, civilian personnel numbers decline from 102,595 to 50,748, only a 44% decline.<sup>5</sup> AMC recognizes that this change in work force composition will require an increased dependence upon and requirements for civilians with skills in leadership, mobilization, TMDE [Test, Maintenance, and Diagnostic Equipment], testing, and security.<sup>6</sup>

Still AMC insists on retaining military officers in their top leadership positions throughout the organization. Without the continued presence of military, AMC officials fear a loss of contact with the soldier in the foxhole. They feel that military officers rotating in and out of AMC in leadership positions are vital to keeping AMC in contact with the Army they support. Downsizing required an acceptance of permanent change of station turmoil and military managers experienced in dealing with civilians. These two "evils" are necessary to gain insights from military with recent field exposure. Still, they recognize that placing civilians in deputy

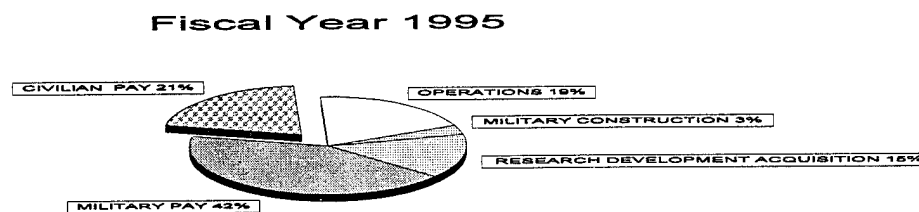


Fig. 1. Fiscal Year 1995 Total Obligational Authority extracted from *The Army Budget 1996-1997 President's Budget* (Washington: Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management, 1995) 5.

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positions, previously held by military, throughout AMC (a move made necessary by the decline in the number of military officers assigned to AMC), they have decreased the on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for military in the leadership of civilian organizations.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, they are eager to see change, recognizing that -- with a smaller work force -- efficiency is a most important concept, and a well-educated work force either military or civilian, is essential.

Another reason for the need for efficient military management of civilians is that field

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**Field grade officers are likely to supervise civilians.**

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grade officers are likely to supervise civilians. September 1994 figures indicate that 48% of captains and 68% of majors were assigned to Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) organizations likely to have civilian employees. These figures included combat arms, combat support, and combat service support officers.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the issue of leading and caring for civilians is becoming increasingly important as the need for deploying civilians to

combat zones continues to grow.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to Desert Storm, combat arms officers could complete a twenty-year career without ever supervising a

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**Leading and caring for civilians is becoming increasingly important as the need for deploying civilians to combat zones continues to grow. The combat arms commander will have to make policy decisions regarding civilian employees.**

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civilian employee. Now, that has changed. Civilians deploying overseas with combat troops will increasingly be the norm in a drawdown Army involved in all types of worldwide commitments and operations. As Raymond J. Sumser and Charles W. Hemingway wrote in a recent essay for the Association of the U.S. Army:

As the Army transitions into Force XXI, the emerging importance of civilian ... employees to the Army's success on the battlefield and beyond cannot be overstated. The Army must take into account ...

what an increased need to rely on civilian ... employees means to operations. When a crisis occurs, the Army cannot be in the position of then discovering the extent of reliance on civilian members of the force.... At the tactical level, commanders and their soldiers who work directly with civilian ... employees need a clearer understanding of where civilians "fit" within their organizations. They need to know what is expected from the civilians and the civilians need to know what they can expect from the military. This is critical when the unit is deployed.<sup>10</sup>

AMC responded to the problems they encountered in deploying civilians to the Gulf with a Civilian Deployment Guide which addresses a variety of issues from authority to deploy civilians, to weapons and training, to leave accumulation and hours of work. In nearly every case, AMC lays out its policy with the proviso that final decisions are the prerogative of the in-theater commander. For example, "... civilians accompanying the armed forces ... may be issued sidearms for their personal self defense. Issuance is subject to authorization by the in-theater commander...."<sup>11</sup> The point is that the combat arms commander will have to make policy decisions regarding civilian employees, so it is vital that he understand civilian personnel issues.

In addition to the growing importance of civilians in the Army work force, we hope that this paper will be particularly useful because the time is right to make changes. The process of redesigning the Army (Force XXI) and

redesigning the government (The National Performance Review) is well underway.<sup>12</sup> Section 1101 of Title 5, U.S. Code gives us a

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**This paper will provide a blueprint for thinking about long-range, systemic changes at the same time we reenergize the short-term changes currently underway.**

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vehicle for devising an operational demonstration project to test our recommendations. This paper will provide a blueprint for thinking about long-range, systemic changes at the same time that we reenergize the short-term changes currently underway. Additionally, we must

convince commanders of the importance of the one-third of their work force that wears civilian clothes to work everyday.

## **Background**

The concept of noncombatant participation in the defense of the nation is as old as warfare itself. Throughout history, noncombatants have provided services essential to moving, equipping, and maintaining armies. As far back as the Revolutionary War, civilians performed key support functions vital to achieving victory and establishing the independence of the United States.<sup>13</sup> As the nation grew, so also did the need for a military force capable of performing a wide range of missions in protection of the national interest, and so also did the civilian work force.

By the time World War II ended, the Army recognized that the growth in civilian personnel in DA provided a unique set of leadership and training challenges that could not be ignored by a military moving into the nuclear age. As early as 1954, Congress requested that the General Accounting Office look into the leadership aspects of the civilian-military mix and evaluate the potential conflicts and benefits associated with the use of civilian personnel in supervisory positions. During the period immediately after the Korean War, it was not unusual to find many military installations with organizations in which both a civilian employee and a military officer were assigned supervisory responsibilities which, in practice, overlapped to the extent that it was questionable whether two positions were justified. The GAO found the rationale for this duality based on two arguments. First, officials argued that the maintenance of a "complete and direct military line of authority" was essential and that second, the "actual benefit from the work of the military incumbent is the training and development of the career officer whose assignment to the particular installation may be relatively brief."<sup>14</sup>

Nearly twenty years later, Congress evaluated the training aspects of this relationship by launching an inquiry into the effectiveness of "long-term, full-time training programs for civilian employees." Again the GAO determined that all the services were remiss in establishing both the planning and implementation of a viable system to plan, schedule, and execute a comprehensive civilian training program comparable to the officer graduate education program.<sup>15</sup> With the advent of the All Volunteer Force in 1973, the Department of Defense (DOD) adopted a "Total Force" policy which "recognized that the reserves, retired military members, civilian government workers, and private contractor personnel could add to the active forces in ensuring the national defense."<sup>16</sup>

In spite of these studies, problems between the civilian and military components of the DA work force persisted. The 1986 DAIG report said, "Army leaders are failing to provide effective leadership ... [and] ... are seldom held accountable for failures in managing civilian personnel."<sup>17</sup> Six years later, the Civilian Leadership Development Action Plan reiterated this same theme when it concluded that "Total Army culture is not linked together, there is a need to enhance the military's ability to lead and care for civilians."<sup>18</sup>

Within the DOD work force, the Army was the largest user of civilian employees throughout the post World War II era followed by the Navy, the Air Force, and other DOD organizations.<sup>19</sup> As the largest employer of civilian personnel within the DOD and the federal government, the Department of the Army continued its efforts to define and clarify its civilian-military mix in a fashion that would improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of what became the "Total Army".

Over time the Army transformed thousands of positions previously held by uniformed personnel into authorizations filled with civilians. A recent GAO report provided a detailed breakout of these positions within the Army infrastructure. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Civilians Within the Army as a Percentage of Personnel by Programming Categories for Fiscal Year 1994

<b>• Program Category</b>	<b>Percentage of employees that are civilian</b>
Central Logistics	96.2
Research and development	84.6
Combat Installations	78.0
Support activities	77.4
Service management headquarters	66.9
Medical support	52.5
Tactical/mobility	3.5

Source: United States, General Accounting Office, *DOD Force Mix Issues* (Washington: GPO, 1994) table II.1.

The top six rows of Table 1 represent program categories where over 50% of the Army work force is composed of civilians. From these percentages it is apparent that civilians are overwhelmingly represented in the combat support and combat service support areas. By contrast, only 3.5% of the Tactical/Mobility program area is composed of civilians. Based on numbers alone, the Army understood it needed a viable and comprehensive program to integrate

and use civilians in a manner that maximized their utility while meeting the growing calls from Congress to the military services to maximize efficiency while minimizing costs.

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## **Chapter 2. What are the Current Issues?**

As we stated earlier, our research disclosed that the major problems military managers must address are: real and perceived inequities between military and civilian personnel systems, e.g., compensation, education, and discipline, that lead to we/they attitudes; and military leaders who do not understand the rules governing their civilian employees.

### **Real and Perceived Differences**

One might reasonably ask why individuals who pride themselves on their leadership abilities and whose livelihood depends upon leading others under conditions of extreme adversity, i.e., combat, apparently experience difficulty leading and caring for the one-third of their work force who do not wear uniforms. The answer is complex. However, one major reason is that the two personnel systems governing military and civilians are designed to be different.

Different personnel systems alone are not a major impediment to progress, but real and perceived inequities which arise because of the different systems can cause grave problems. For example, civilian employees who leave when their eight-hour workdays are over are sometimes perceived by the military as "clock watchers" because they seem unwilling to work the same hours as their military counterparts. In fact, if those civilians stayed beyond their forty hours per week, the commander would be obligated to pay overtime or compensatory time, both of which mount up quickly in terms of dollars. The commander, who does not understand the situation and does not budget properly for overtime, can sabotage his finances by expecting equal time from military and civilian employees.

We need to take a close look at the real differences between the military and civilian personnel systems. (See Table 2)

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Table 2

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SYSTEMS**

<b><u>MILITARY</u></b>	<b><u>CIVILIAN</u></b>
TITLE 10, USC	TITLE 5, USC
RANK IN PERSON	RANK IN JOB
CENTRALIZED	DECENTRALIZED
TRAINING PRIMARILY for LEADERSHIP and MILITARY SKILLS	TRAINING PRIMARILY OCCUPATIONALLY ORIENTED
MANDATORY MOBILITY	VOLUNTARY MOBILITY

Source: Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civilian Personnel

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At first glance, one might say that all employees are pretty much the same across the board, and to some degree, that is correct. All employees are concerned about pay, benefits, vacation, professional development, and performance evaluations. Many employees need to be disciplined, counselled, or mentored. The key, however, is in how these actions take place. These systems are so different that they generate real and perceived inequities between military and civilians which then propagate a we/they relationship between the two parts of the work force. To break down each and every difference between the civilian and military systems is beyond the scope of this paper, but we will examine a few of the major differences to support our reasoning.

**The Personnel System: Open or Closed?**

"The military personnel system can be characterized as 'closed', person-oriented, and centralized, while the system governing the management of civilians is 'open', job-oriented, and

decentralized. Military people usually enter at the bottom of the grade structure; they are trained, and then, as they progress through the system in a sequence of career broadening assignments, they achieve appropriate rank and pay raises."<sup>1</sup> Military career management is based on a concept of life-cycle management which consists of eight personnel management functions: structure, acquisition, individual training and education, distribution, sustainment, professional development, and separation.<sup>2</sup> The goal is to ensure that the Army develops the required number of soldiers with the requisite skills to accomplish the mission.

Civilians, on the other hand, move in and out of the civil service system. Grade and pay are vested in the job rather than the individual. They are recruited, utilized, developed, and sustained on a decentralized basis. Civilians are either permanent employees or temporary appointments. Their work schedules vary from full-time (40 hours per week) to part-time (16-32 hours per week) or intermittent (as needed).

Long-range centralized planning and progressive training are necessary on the military side to ensure that people with the right skills and experience are available where and when they are needed. On the other hand, since trained civilians can be hired and enter the system in any job at any level, long-term planning that includes training programs and career broadening assignments has not been as important. Civilian personnel are hired fully qualified for their jobs.<sup>3</sup> Partly because of these divergent features, the military personnel system receives more attention from the Department of the Army than the civilian system.

### **Differences in Compensation**

In addition to these overall differences between the military and civilian systems, specific differences, beginning with compensation, lead directly to the we/they perceptions. Striking differences in military and civilian pay systems make valid comparisons difficult, but some

DOD-sponsored cost studies are of interest. Information concerning the cost of uniformed personnel versus comparable civilian personnel has evolved over the years. In 1978, a Brookings Institution study found acceptance among many military managers that civilian personnel were more costly than their military counterparts.<sup>4</sup> However, a Rand study conducted ten years later concluded that a civilian employee performing a peacetime support function in the United States costs, on average, \$15,000 less per year than an equivalent uniformed counterpart.<sup>5</sup> This study defined Regular Military Compensation as the compilation of basic pay, basic allowance for subsistence, basic allowance for quarters, and a federal income tax advantage calculated to take into consideration the nontaxable status of the allowances for subsistence and quarters. Civilian compensation included the elements of base pay, other pay, and benefits. Table 3 summarizes the current cost comparisons between uniformed and civilian employees.

These differences result primarily from the fact that military personnel generate more secondary support requirements (family care, medical, etc.) than do civilian employees. Furthermore, additional backup (or pipeline) positions are included in the military strength as Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students (TTHS).<sup>6</sup> With the trend towards cost savings and other efficiencies as the Army downsizes, the Army is moving to hire additional civilians to replace military personnel, particularly in the service support arena. A recent proposal in the 1996 defense authorization bill has a provision that by September 30, 1997, 10,000 military positions in personnel management, data processing and other support functions will be converted to civilian positions.<sup>7</sup> Military personnel strength is down by 23% and is headed for an additional 10% cut for a total reduction of 33% by 1999. Meanwhile only 14% of civilian jobs have been cut since 1990.<sup>8</sup> This exemplifies the increasingly important role of civilians within the Army.

Table 3

1994 Average Cost Comparison of Annual Military and Civilian Compensation Between  
Comparable Pay Grades in the Continental United States (CONUS)

Military Compensation		Civilian Compensation		
Grade	Pay	Grade	Pay	Difference
O-6	\$110,663	GS-15	\$95,853	\$14,810
O-5	\$92,227	GS-14	\$79,824	\$12,453
		GS-13	\$66,887	\$25,390
O-4	\$76,116	GS-12	\$55,524	\$20,591
O-3	\$60,871	GS-11	\$45,837	\$15,034
		GS-10	\$42,824	\$18,047
O-2	\$48,240	GS-9	\$37,756	\$10,484
		GS-8	\$34,953	\$13,287
O-1	\$36,064	GS-7	\$31,294	\$4,770

Source: United States, General Accounting Office, *DOD Force Mix Issues* (Washington: GPO, 1994) table III.1.

### How Many Hours in the Work Day? Who Pays the Bill?

Military managers are sometimes hampered in their efforts to manage the civilian work week effectively because of the restrictive legislation governing hours and days of work for civilian employees. As a general rule, for time worked in excess of a forty-hour week, a civilian employee is authorized overtime pay, at one and one-half times the hourly rate, as long as his basic pay does not exceed the minimum rate of basic pay for a GS-10 employee. Compensatory time, which is time off, is authorized for civilian employees GS-10 and above for time worked in excess of a forty-hour work week.<sup>9</sup> Both overtime and compensatory time will cost the

military supervisor either through the budget process for overtime or through time off for compensatory time. It is vitally important that a military supervisor become totally familiar with the civilian pay system and work rules.

To the local commander military employees are considered "cost free" because they do not affect his budget. They are centrally managed and budgeted for at DA, whereas, civilian employees are managed and budgeted for locally. Since civilians are paid out of operations and maintenance (O&M) funds, over which local commanders have control, each civilian hired means less money for other uses of O&M funds. Local commanders at times have delayed filling vacancies to cover other costs which has sent the wrong signal to the civilian work force about the importance of civilian employees to the organization.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Education: Do We Have a Level Playing Field?**

The civilian education system is different from the military. The civilian personnel system does not have a personnel account comparable to the military TTHS account. Therefore, when a civilian attends training, the command must absorb the loss until the civilian employee returns. This makes many commanders hesitant to allow key personnel to attend long-term training away from their place of duty.

Civilian training is primarily occupationally oriented. In the past, civilian training took place to improve efficiency in the current job, not to prepare the employee for a different or higher level job. Army leadership took steps to redefine the civilian education system. Efforts in this area resulted in the Army Civilian Training and Education Development System (ACTEDS) which is patterned after the military system. See Chapter 4 for further discussion.

Because the actual management of the civilian work force is decentralized to installation/activity, commanders and local managers are responsible for an employee's training

needs. This involves on-the-job training, arranging for employees to obtain needed classroom training, and the ability to counsel employees regarding available training opportunities to improve skills and performance.

Civilian training is an area that is generally unfamiliar to the military supervisor, yet he is expected to mentor his civilian employees and ensure that they receive the training they need to progress in their careers. For the military officer individual training and education are a continuing factor in military service and career management, based upon overall Army manning requirements, and generally without cost to the officer. For the most part civilian training must be budgeted for at the local level. If the budget is tight, civilian training will likely suffer. Recently some schools have been centrally funded, but the commander still faces the problem of backfilling a civilian while he is at school.

Military education, on the other hand, is very centralized, and the career management of each officer is planned for well in advance. The vehicle for achieving this goal is the Military Qualification Standards (MQS) system. It provides a blueprint for officer training and leader development in both resident schools and units. It is designed to integrate the efforts of school commandants, unit commanders, and individual officers as the officers pursue their professional development and acquire the skills they require to go to war.<sup>11</sup>

### **Can You Fire a Civilian?**

Disciplinary actions for the military fall under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) while civilians are governed by civil service rules and regulations. "Protection of [civilian] employees' rights is built into the system, and any deviation from the required procedures may result in the supervisor having to keep the unsatisfactory employee or at least to start the separation process over."<sup>12</sup> Throughout our interviews, one of the most common

complaints was the excessive tracking and paperwork that was necessary to separate an unsatisfactory civilian employee for poor performance. The 1986 Inspector General report also verifies the excessive paperwork requirement and goes on to state, "As a result of either the perception that separating an employee is impossible or the unwillingness of supervisors to begin the process, unsatisfactory performers remain, causing both productivity and the morale to suffer." This is unfamiliar ground for the military supervisor, and he must maintain constant contact with the local CPO and the Management Employee Relations (MER) section to assure that all of his actions are by the book. He can use separation only after all other disciplinary/corrective measures have been tried. This is not limited to DA; a recent survey by the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) found 78% of federal supervisors had encountered at least one employee with a performance problem, but only 23% had taken steps to demote or fire the employee. According to the director of policy and evaluation at MSPB, this survey of more than 5,700 federal managers and supervisors showed that few managers acted to discipline or fire problem employees because they did not understand the procedures or received confusing advice from their agency's "experts."<sup>13</sup>

### **Mobility: Mandatory versus Voluntary**

Few other professions present the challenge to family life that comes with being part of the military. Challenges such as separations, travel, duty in remote locations, and the diminished ability to choose where you are going to live are a part of daily life in a military organization.<sup>14</sup> Because of mandatory mobility, the service member is faced with moving every two to four years, and over a career of twenty to thirty years, moving fifteen times is not unusual. With an up or out promotion system, the service member is constantly on the move either to a more responsible job or to a school to prepare for the next assignment or promotion. On the other



hand, the civilian employee has the option of staying in one place his entire career, although it could limit his chances for advancement, depending on his location.

During crisis situations, the service member and the civilian employee are in somewhat similar circumstances in that under existing DOD policies and procedures, management has the authority to direct and assign civilian employees, either voluntarily or involuntarily, to accomplish the DOD mission. AMC addressed this issue as follows: when the need for a particular skill arises, and before a civilian employee is sent involuntarily, a search is conducted to find military personnel or a civilian volunteer.<sup>15</sup>

### **Does the Supervisor Know the Rules?**

Our second significant finding concerns the military leader who does not understand the rules governing his civilian employees. Civilian employees feel they are at a disadvantage based on disparate training opportunities in relation to the military, and because of military supervisors who do not understand the civilian management system. DACs feel this results in poor mentoring and loss of potential career opportunities.<sup>16</sup> The 1986 Inspector General Report stated that while both military and civilian supervisors often show little interest in the career development of subordinate employees, the problem is deeper than that. Many are not aware of their responsibilities concerning the career development of Army civilians, and are not prepared to counsel the individual employees effectively. There is no course to provide such instruction to supervisors and managers.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to poor mentorship, military supervisors frequently fail to understand and explain perceived differences to their work force. This enhances the we/they syndrome. Returning to our previous example of civilian employees who leave when their eight-hour workdays are over, if the military supervisor cannot explain to his military work force the

financial burden of civilian overtime/compensatory time, and the importance of the overall civilian contribution, he can face a real morale problem.

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### Chapter 3. Understanding the Fifth Discipline

As we became involved in our topic and began trying to think of fixes for the problems we identified, we realized that what we were up against was not simple and certainly was not going to be fixed overnight. We began talking among ourselves about the need for a change in the corporate culture that forms the sometimes stereotypical and incorrect views of military leaders about their civilian employees and vice versa.

We sought a management or organizational behavior theory or model that could guide us in our creative process. We looked at the works of Chris Argyris and Peter Senge, who are well known for their work with the theory of the learning organization. We also studied the ideas of Professor Ronald Heifetz, Director, Program on Leadership at Harvard University, in his book, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, and Edgar Schein, an expert on organizational culture at MIT.

We finally settled on Peter Senge's concepts of systems thinking and the shifting the burden archetype as he outlines them in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*. We will first give an explanation of these basic precepts which seem to us to be the most applicable of Senge's ideas. We believe these ideas can lead us to fundamental solutions to problems which have plagued military supervisors for forty years.

Senge explains that most of us are taught to break complex problems apart in order to make them more manageable. Unfortunately, that causes us to lose our connection to the larger whole. When we later try to see the "big picture" again, it is rather like trying to see a true reflection in a broken mirror which you have glued back together.<sup>1</sup>

According to Senge, we need to give up the idea that the world is created of separate, unrelated forces. In short, we need to look at the entire system and recognize the effect that changes in one area will ultimately have in another part of the whole.

Senge developed five learning disciplines: team learning, building shared vision, mental models, personal mastery, and systems thinking.<sup>2</sup> The fifth discipline, systems thinking, "is the discipline that integrates the disciplines fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. ... Without a systemic orientation, there is no motivation to look at how the disciplines interrelate. By enhancing each of the other disciplines, it continually reminds us that the whole can exceed the sum of its parts."<sup>3</sup>

Systems thinking makes understandable a new way that individuals can see themselves and their world. It underlines the shift of mind from seeing oneself as separate from the world to seeing oneself connected to the world. We no longer see problems as caused by someone "out there;" rather, we see how our own actions create the problems we perceive. In learning organizations, people continually discover how they create their own reality and how they can change it.<sup>4</sup>

In developing the systems thinking discipline, Senge points out, "[o]ne of the most important, and potentially most empowering, insights to come from the young field of systems thinking is that certain patterns of structure recur again and again. These 'system archetypes' ... embody the key to learning to see structures in our ... organizational lives."<sup>5</sup> Senge uses nine archetypes.

The second of these archetypes, shifting the burden, fits our identified problems.

Senge defines shifting the burden as follows:

An underlying problem generates symptoms that demand attention. But the underlying problem is difficult for people to address, either because it is obscure or costly to confront. So people "shift the burden" of their problem to other solutions -- well-intentioned, easy fixes which seem extremely efficient. Unfortunately, the easier "solutions" only ameliorate the symptoms; they leave the underlying problem unaltered. The underlying problem grows

worse, unnoticed because the symptoms apparently clear up, and the system loses whatever abilities it had to solve the underlying problem.<sup>6</sup>

Senge correctly warns "Beware [of] the symptomatic solution. Solutions that address only the symptoms of a problem, not the fundamental causes, tend to have short-term benefits at best. In the long term the problem resurfaces and there is increased pressure for symptomatic response. Meanwhile, the capability for fundamental solutions can atrophy."<sup>7</sup>

Senge diagrams the shifting the burden archetype showing two balancing (stabilizing) processes. (See Figure 2.) The top circle represents the symptomatic solution or "quick fix" that

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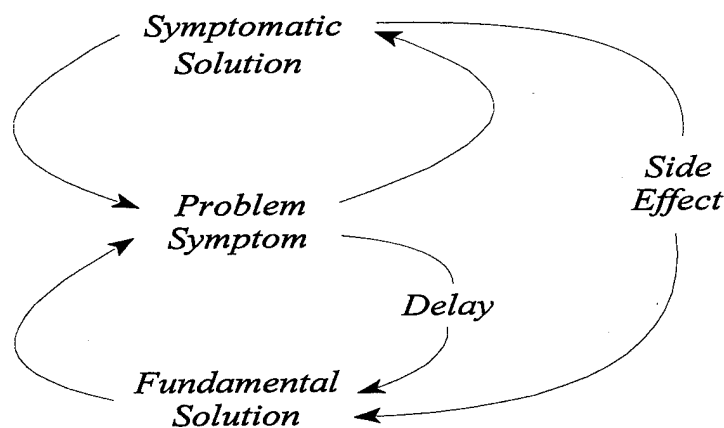


Fig. 2. Shifting the Burden figure from Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990) 380.

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solves the problem quickly, but only temporarily and may create side effects that make it even more difficult to find the fundamental solution. The bottom circle represents the fundamental solution to the problem. This solution may take longer to implement, (hence the delay in the circle), but it works more effectively and may be the only enduring answer to the problem.<sup>8</sup>

In the next chapter, we will show you how the Army continues to shift the burden for solving the fundamental problems encountered when the military lead civilians.

### **Endnotes**

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## Chapter 4. What are the Answers?

Just as the issues are complex, so are the solutions. The Army has made progress since 1986 on the shortcomings identified in the DAIG report. There has been some streamlining of the civilian personnel management system, revision of the civilian performance evaluation system, and some improvement in the professional education opportunities available to civilian employees.<sup>1</sup> On the officer side, the importance of leading civilians as well as military has found its way into Army Field Manuals, and the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is adding instruction on civilian management issues to officer education. There is more to be done.

What do Peter Senge's ideas mean for the Department of the Army in trying to resolve problems that have been with us for forty years? It means that there is no magic, quick fix solution which will make everything better overnight. It means that whatever solutions ultimately emerge cannot be imposed from above; they must gain support at all levels of the organization. It means that the entire system (organization) must work together to resolve issues. It means that military leaders cannot be effective in trying to resolve problems if they are in conflict with civilian leaders. It means that even if these leaders agree, their fixes will not succeed if workers and supervisors at all levels do not see them as solutions and accept and support them in their daily activities.

Senge's shifting the burden archetype fits the problems we have identified very well. For example, the first major problem area we identified was real and perceived differences in the military and civilian personnel management systems. If we diagram this problem in Senge's terms, it looks like Figure 3.

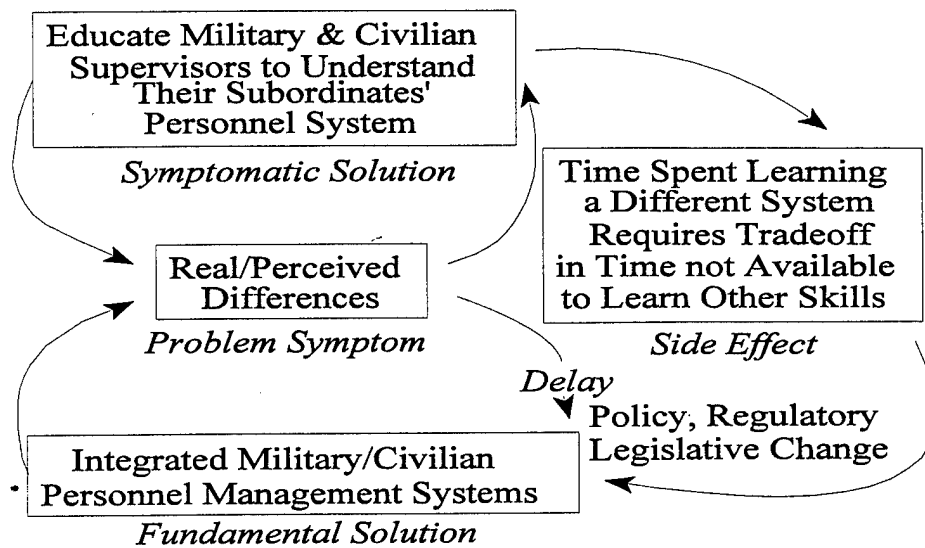


Fig. 3. Real and Perceived Differences

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The problem symptom is the real and perceived differences between the military and civilian personnel systems -- differences in compensation, educational opportunities, disciplinary options, etc. Thus far, the fixes DA attempted fall into the category of symptomatic solutions -- relatively easy, short term fixes which "scratch the itch" and allow the organization to continue with its mission. For example, inserting information about the management of civilians into the officer military education curriculum seems to be a good way to address this problem. Similarly, teaching civilian supervisors about the military personnel system also seems like a logical step. But is it?

If we view the system as a whole, and examine the effect of this symptomatic solution on the whole system, we can identify what Senge calls a side effect. Both military and civilian supervisors will spend a significant portion of their professional education learning a system



very different from their own. This can only be done through a tradeoff of time not spent studying some other professional topic.

Time spent at DA schools is very carefully parcelled out among topics which Army leaders have designated as essential to the professional development of officer and civilian students. There is no time in the curriculum of any of these schools which is not already filled with some other directed instruction. The break out of time allotted to various topics is hard fought among the proponents of the different disciplines whether it be tactics, military law, supply accountability, maintenance, or weapons training. Why take time from these topics to teach a new personnel management system, if there is a better way?

Of course, that leads us to the better way -- what Senge calls the fundamental solution. In this case the fundamental solution is the evolution of functionally and operationally integrated military and civilian personnel systems. Systems that recognize fundamental differences between military and civilian personnel which cannot be changed, e.g., the right to unionize or file a grievance, at the same time that they bring those elements which can converge together to form integrated systems. A useful analogy is the individual who learns to drive a car with an automatic transmission. That individual will have less trouble learning to drive a car with a standard transmission than someone who never drove at all. If the basics of the military and civilian personnel management systems were the same, e.g., truly similar evaluation reports, centralized promotion boards, standard officer and civilian education levels, straight salaries vice overtime/compensatory time, it would not be difficult for an individual familiar with one system to make the minor adjustments necessary to transition to the other system.

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**The fundamental solution is the evolution of functionally and operationally integrated military and civilian personnel systems.**

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This fundamental solution requires a time delay during which policy, regulatory, and even legislative change must take place, but the vehicle for such a change exists in the form of a demonstration project. The demonstration project is permitted under Section 1101 of Title 5, US Code.<sup>2</sup> Demonstration projects are permitted, subject to congressional oversight, to allow experimentation with new and different personnel management concepts in controlled situations to achieve more efficient management and greater productivity.<sup>3</sup> It would provide the opportunity for a large scale operational test of a revised civilian personnel system which is more closely integrated with the military system. Where necessary, changes could also be tested which would make the military system similar to the civilian.

Each of the subelements of real and perceived differences that we discussed in Chapter 2 also fit Senge's shifting the burden archetype. Figure 4 shows the current issue of different systems for compensating civilian and military employees.

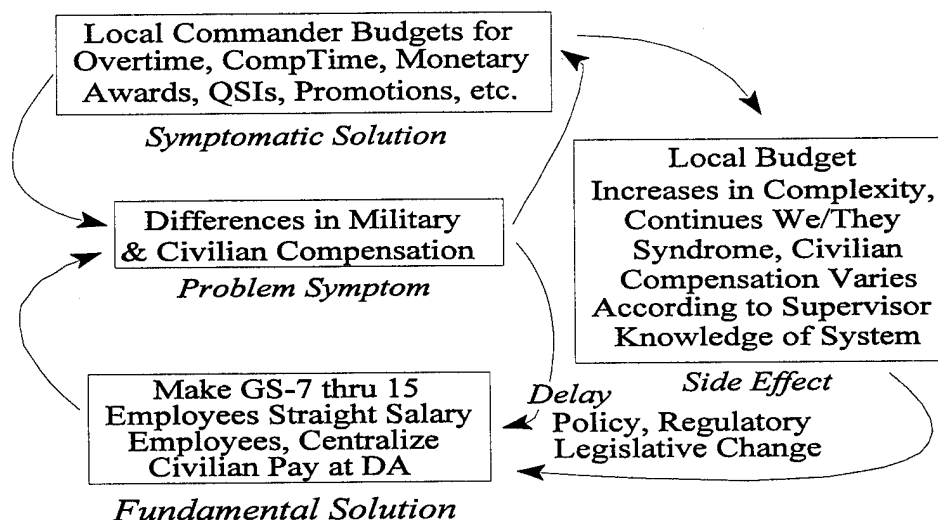


Fig. 4. Differences in Compensation

In this diagram the problem symptom is the real difference between civilian and military pay and the perceived difference that we discussed in Chapter 2 when the civilian leaves after the eight-hour day is complete because his supervisor is unwilling or unable to pay overtime or compensatory time and the military employees are left to finish the job. The symptomatic solution places the burden upon the local commander to properly budget for anticipated overtime requirements as well as monetary awards, quality step increases (QSI) in pay, and salary increases for civilians who are promoted during the fiscal year.

The commander's ability to do this is, of course, dependent upon his knowledge of the system, but even in a perfect world where the supervisor is totally familiar with the civilian compensation system, unpleasant side effects quickly appear. As the commander's budget increases in complexity, it fosters a requirement for additional resources. The system continues to feed the we/they syndrome because military personnel not only see civilians getting off after eight hours, they also see them receive cash awards while the soldiers "only get a ribbon at the end of a three year tour." Finally, the level of civilian compensation under this system is dependent upon the commander's understanding of the system. If he has budgeted well, his civilians will be handsomely rewarded with deserved bonuses and awards. If he has not done his job, they get nothing. Furthermore, the commander who incorrectly guesses what his overtime requirement may be, frequently finds himself having to use training dollars or other O&M dollars to pay civilians, thus causing a potential decrease in readiness.

So what is the fundamental solution?

Make all GS-7 through GS-15 employees  
straight salary employees and centralize

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**Make all GS-7 through GS-15 employees  
straight salary employees and centralize  
civilian pay at DA level.**

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civilian pay at DA level. The current system of monetary awards and bonuses for civilian

employees parallels private industry. The fact is, however, that there are few similarities between government and private industry. Most government agencies are not engaged in producing a product, so it is difficult to quantify employee accomplishments and reward them with a clear, *consistent* system of bonuses. (Depots and arsenals may be an exception to this rule.)

Centralizing pay at DA level would relieve the local commander of the burden of budgeting for his civilian pay. He would not have to choose between paying civilians and fulfilling important O&M requirements, and his civilian pay funds would not be subject to funding level decisions at his higher headquarters. His employees would receive their pay directly from DA as do the soldiers assigned to his command. This option has the downside of limiting the commander's ability to increase and decrease his work force locally according to a fluctuating workload; however, that problem could be worked at DA as a force development issue similar to establishing authorized and required manning levels on the military side.

Figure 5 addresses the differences in civilian and military educational opportunities as a shifting the burden archetype.

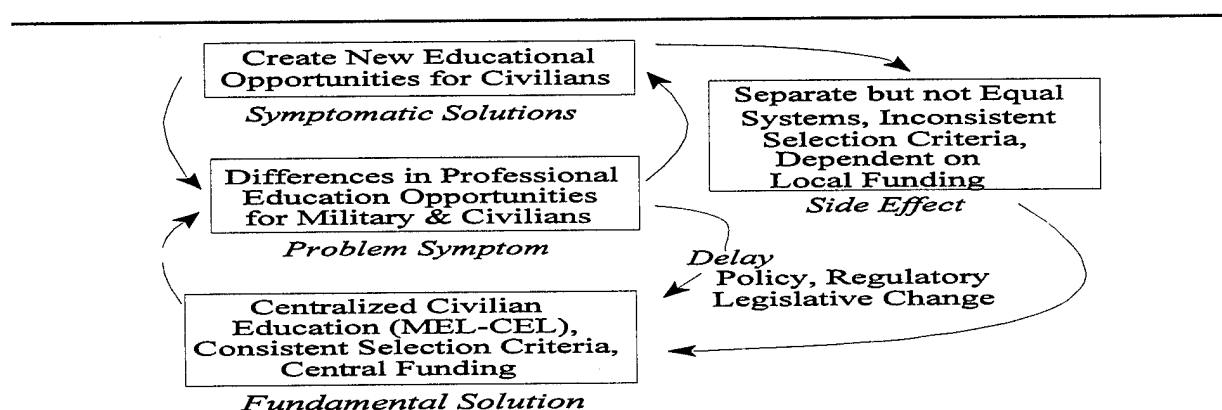


Fig. 5. Differences in Educational Opportunities

The problem symptom here is the difference in professional educational opportunities for civilian and military personnel. In 1986 with the decision to implement ACTEDS, the Army established a series of new professional opportunities for civilians. It included prescribed leadership, managerial, and technical core curricula, sequentially and progressively patterned to "grow" employees through their careers.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, the Army Management Staff College (AMSC) and attendance by civilian interns at the Army Officer Basic Courses in some combat support and combat service support branches were also added. In Senge's terms this decision was a classic example of a symptomatic solution rather than a fundamental solution.

Unfortunately, the side effect is the establishment of "separate but not equal" systems. Although AMSC parallels the military Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in preparing mid-level civilians (GS-12 to GS-14) for service on higher level staffs, it does not provide the same opportunity as CGSC attendance, because the length of the courses and the programs of instruction differ considerably.

Furthermore, local commanders, remember, are not given backfills for key civilians who wish to attend AMSC. Many commanders, therefore, do not send all of their qualified civilians to the school. Neither do they necessarily send their best qualified.

There is no standardized criteria for measuring a civilian's professional educational level *vis a vis* his peers. On the military side, the Military Education Level (MEL) criteria make clear what level of training this individual has completed. (See Table 4.) For civilian training there is no such equivalent standard.

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Table 4

Military Education Level Codes

<b>Military (Commissioned Officer)</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Senior Service Graduate
2	Senior Service College Resident Selectee
3	Army War College Course Selectee (Corresponding Studies)
4	Command Staff College Level Graduate
5	Command Staff Level Selectee
6	Branch Advanced Course Graduate
7	Branch Basic Course Graduate
8	Specialist Course

Source: U. S. Army Materiel Command

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Finally, although AMSC and civilian attendance at the Senior Service Colleges is centrally funded, other civilian educational opportunities remain locally funded which means opportunities are limited by budget constraints. Since civilian education is funded with O&M funds, it must compete in priority with other mission oriented training as well as purchasing and maintenance. Again, the system is dependent upon how well the local commander understands the budget process. He not only needs to request sufficient funds for civilian pay and training needs, he must hope that his higher headquarters will give him the full amount he has requested.

The fundamental solution is to centralize and standardize selection, funding, and measurement of civilian education levels. The training itself could

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**The fundamental solution is to centralize and standardize selection, funding, and measurement of civilian education levels.**

---

be locally executed in some cases, e.g., Leadership, Education, and Development Course (LEAD), orientation training, etc., but centralization and standardization should be the rule whenever feasible to ensure fairness in selection and consistency in content and quality. Backfills should be available to free selected civilians to attend long term schooling, and funding should be controlled at DA level.

Furthermore, a U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC) proposal to establish Civilian Education Levels (CEL) paralleling the MELs should be adopted. (See Table 5.) This would make clear to any potential employers the professional education level of the civilian employee. The AMC proposal also requires that civilians can only hold certain positions if they have achieved the appropriate CEL.

Recognizing that the fundamental solutions to the problems we have identified will take years to create, should we stop the interim progress being made on the symptomatic solutions? Absolutely not, but there are some additional changes which we can implement.

Table 5

## Military and Civilian Education Level Codes

<b>Military (Commissioned Officer)</b>		<b>Civilian</b>	
<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	Senior Service Graduate	1	Senior Service Graduate SMEDP Graduate
2	Senior Service College Resident Selectee	2	Senior Service College Selectee SMEDP Selectee
3	Army War College Course Selectee (Corresponding Studies)	3	Army War College Course Selectee (Corresponding Studies)
4	Command Staff College Level Graduate	4	Army Management Staff College Graduate LDR DEV for Mid-Managers Graduate
5	Command Staff Level Selectee	5	AMSC Selectee LDR DEV for Mid-Managers
6	Branch Advanced Course Graduate	6	LDR DEV for Journeyman Level Grad PME I, II, OLE
7	Branch Basic Course Graduate	7	LDR DEV for Journeyman Level Selectee
8	Specialist Course	8	Intern LDR DEV Course

Source: U. S. Army Materiel Command

**Endnote**

1. The Army Management Staff College provides comprehensive management level training to key GS-12 through GS-14 employees. Some civilian interns now attend Army Officer Basic Courses in combat support and combat service support branches. The Center for Army



Leadership provides a core leadership curriculum for civilian career fields which includes training for interns, first time supervisors, and executives. For a more detailed explanation see "Developing Civilian Leaders for Force XXI" in the January-February 1996 issue of *Military Review*.

2. While we recognize that the Army used demonstration projects in the past to address civilian personnel issues, these efforts appear to have been focussed primarily on cost savings with little regard to increasing the similarities between the military and civilian personnel systems.

3. 5 US Code, Sec. 1101, 1994, 584.

4. US, Department of the Army, *Civilian Leader Development Task Force Final Report and Action Plan*, (Fort Monroe, VA: United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, Apr. 1990) 12.

## **Chapter 5. Don't Throw the Baby Out with the Bath Water**

Just because the changes currently underway in DA are not fundamental solutions in Senge's terms, it does not necessarily follow that they cannot be useful in the short-term at the same time that DA undertakes fundamental solutions to the problems we have identified. We anticipate that the delays shown in Chapter 4 will be at least five to ten years for development, testing, evaluation and implementation of our fundamental solutions. During that time, if no changes are made, another entire generation of officers will reach field grade with little understanding of civilian personnel management.

### **Near-Term Educational Changes**

Education plays a major role in the resolution of all of the problems we have identified; therefore, TRADOC should continue its on-going initiative to integrate civilian personnel management into officer education. Some recommendations for short-term changes follow.

The Three Pillars of Leadership Development, institutional training, operational assignments, and individual self development, offer a ready made blueprint for training military officers to lead civilians. The institutional training pillar is under construction. As we noted earlier, TRADOC has launched an initiative to add instruction on civilian management to the core curriculum of certain military training courses. In order to develop an officer's managerial abilities from the bottom up; however, this should be a topic of instruction at all levels from Basic Course through the Army War College.<sup>1</sup> The content should include training on the civilian personnel management system, emphasis upon the importance of including the civilian component as full members of the unit at every level, why civilian contributions are invaluable, and recommended methodologies to accomplish the goal.

At the Basic Course level, one might do no more than introduce the civilian evaluation system and focus the young officer's attention on the fact that if he has civilian employees, their welfare is just as important as the well being of his soldiers, and their contributions are equally valuable. He should know that the rules for civilians are different, so he must learn them, and that he may not be able to rely solely on his civilian employees to provide the input he needs to take care of them. He needs to know where to go for advice and assistance. Of course, at the lieutenant level, this will normally be his commander/supervisor, but he also needs be aware of the resources available in the Civilian Personnel Office (CPO).

At the Advanced Course, the instruction should be more detailed and oriented toward mentoring, training, and developing civilian employees as well as simply assigning tasks and evaluating performance. The curriculum should include further specifics on the civilian personnel management system, and general instruction on personnel management techniques and team building.

By the time the officer is at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), he should be thoroughly grounded in the basics of civilian personnel management. Here the instruction could shift to the case study approach where various real life situations are given to groups of students to discuss and develop solutions. Those solutions would then be evaluated for suitability and feasibility in accordance with appropriate regulations.

Pre-command Course (PCC) instruction is particularly vital since commanders are required to set policy on issues such as overtime or compensatory time, budget for awards, evaluate award recommendations, labor-management relations, etc. This virtually needs to be a complete block of instruction, especially for commanders headed for organizations with large

civilian populations. It may even justify a whole course by temporary duty (TDY) enroute to certain commands with a large civilian component.

By the time an officer is at the Senior Service College, he has probably already supervised civilians, and he has an excellent probability of doing so in the future. The colloquium format is most appropriate here.

The operational assignments pillar may be the easiest to implement. ODCSPER should identify those officers who have had experience supervising civilians and continue to assign them to highly civilianized organizations whenever their normal career progression and military specialties permit. In the case of Base Support Battalion (BSB) commanders, for example, the Army has a perfect opportunity to build upon their experience in civilian personnel management by choosing Area Support Group and Garrison Commanders primarily from among the pool of successful BSB commanders.

Some branches lend themselves more easily than others to assignment to mixed civilian/military organizations. Logistics, intelligence, signal, military police, adjutant general, finance, acquisition corps, and ordnance all provide many opportunities for repeat assignments with civilian employees.

Assigning officers to positions where they gain exposure to supervising civilians and where the Army can benefit from their experience costs the Army nothing, and can provide distinct improvements in efficiency by developing experienced managers who are able to run efficient organizations with high morale and cohesiveness. According to a former assignments officer in military intelligence branch, a requirement like this would not be prohibitively difficult to implement. Neither would it have an adverse impact on a military intelligence officer's career development.<sup>2</sup>

Individual self-development in the form of correspondence courses needs to be thoroughly updated. Many such courses underwent a minor revision to add the Total Army Personnel Evaluation System (TAPES) several years ago; unfortunately, the references cited in writing these courses have not been updated, and they include works written as early as the 1960s which have long since passed out of vogue in management circles.

Individual self-development is not limited to correspondence courses. However, what an officer does on his own is largely dependent upon motivation. Demonstrably, many young Army officers spend their free time reading the history of the military art and trying to improve their command and leadership technique by emulating the great captains of history. What encouragement do we give young officers to become good managers of civilians? A couple of sentences in an Army field manual will not send lieutenants and captains scurrying to the library to study the latest Harvard Business School writings on management, but if it is important to the commander, lieutenants and captains will take notice. This is where Army leadership at all levels must play.

Additionally, in accordance with the Leader Development Plan XXI,<sup>3</sup> the format of self-development instruction must be brought into the twenty-first century. Interactive computer programs, VCRs, CD ROMs, etc., are needed to put the instruction in the format of choice for young officers. A current example exists at the US Military Academy where the foreign language department has enjoyed considerable success in developing interactive computer programs for cadet foreign language instruction.

Furthermore, it is quite possible that state of the art self-development programs could be as or more useful and more cost effective than inserting civilian personnel management instruction into resident schooling since, as we have shown, this is only a symptomatic solution,

and it will eventually be unnecessary when our fundamental solution of integrated personnel systems is in place. Of course, the ultimate effectiveness of self-development programs is the emphasis which local commanders place upon their subordinates' understanding of the civilian personnel system.

### **Caring for All Employees**

In order to ensure more than lip service to taking care of civilian employees, military officers must be judged on their ability to lead/manage their entire work force. Evaluation of an officer's understanding of the civilian system and his support of his civilian employees should be added to the core values addressed on the front of the Officer Evaluation Report (OER) -- just as the importance of supporting the equal opportunity program is highlighted on each OER. The cost of this change is negligible since the OER is currently under revision, and the change could be incorporated in the new version of the OER.

Battalion and Brigade commanders take great pains to ensure that officers and soldiers are scheduled for Combined Arms Service Staff School (CAS3), Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC), Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC), Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC) and any number of other career enhancing schools and training rotations. They make certain that all of their OERs, NCOERs, and military award recommendations are submitted on time. If asked why PLDC and BNCOC and OERs and NCOERs are so important, the officer will look at you as if you have just arrived from another planet and intone, "taking care of soldiers," the Army mantra which explains everything from why you get up in the morning to why you routinely miss dinner with your kids.

The truth, however, generally lies deeper. If a battalion commander comes to the Quarterly Training Briefing with the brigade commander and has not taken care of his soldiers

by ensuring they are scheduled for the proper training, he will incur the wrath of either his commander or the brigade command sergeant major. No one sits at the training brief asking who has been scheduled for LEAD and which civilians should be going to the Army Management Staff College. Similarly, when the brigade commander asks the personnel officer (S1) for the status of OERs, NCOERs, and awards, the battalion commander without an iron clad explanation for a late report or award had better look out. Few commanders ask about civilian awards and appraisals.

Brigade commanders are undoubtedly powerful people who can get their subordinates' attention when perturbed, but the emphasis on OERs and NCOERs being submitted on time does not ultimately come from the brigade commander. It comes from the Department of the Army. The statistics on these reports are tracked all the way to DA. That is why they are important to the local commander. The same is true of DA funded schools for officers and NCOs. Nobody at DA tracks civilian performance appraisals; the civilian system is decentralized. The local CPO is supposed to track civilian appraisals, but reporting to commanders varies from CPO to CPO. The S1 may be tracking them, but if a supervisor is late with the civilian appraisal, the S1 simply calls the CPO for an extension that is generally granted.

Local commanders and supervisors at all levels need to check on how well their subordinates are doing at taking care of civilians. This needs to be an important entry on the OER Support Form. If appropriate, it should be a part of the unit Command Inspection Program. Commanders should hold sensing sessions with their civilian employees just as often as they sit down with the officers, NCOs and soldiers of their organization.

## **Advisor on Civilian Issues**

At DA level, Chief of Staff Army (CSA) should appoint a Senior Civilian Advisor who would serve a purpose similar to that of Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA). This action would clearly state the importance of civilian employees at the highest levels. CSA currently has a primary advisor and advocate for enlisted personnel embodied in the SMA. On the officer side he receives input on personnel needs from the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) and on training issues from the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCSOPS). He receives input on military quality of life issues from the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM). He has no comparable advisor(s) who is responsible for keeping him abreast of the needs of his civilian employees.

The cost of this program would be dependent upon the grade of the individual chosen. We recommend a member of the Senior Executive Service (SES) commensurate with the general officer advisors on the officer side. This individual should have a staff similar in size to SMA. SMA has one GS-9, and three military, a sergeant, a staff sergeant, and a sergeant major. The civilian advisor should have a GS-9 and civilians comparable in grade to the three enlisted personnel.

Local commanders can also implement this change at any level where there is already a Command Sergeant Major (CSM). If the number of civilian employees is not large enough to hire a civilian just for this purpose, the commander may consider making it an assigned responsibility of the senior civilian employee in his command. It should not be just an "extra duty" as that tends to give short shrift to the importance of the function. The local civilian personnel officer (CPO) is not the person who should advise a commander on his civilians unless the CPO works directly for the commander as in the case of a garrison commander or area



support group commander. Even then, there may be a conflict of interest for the CPO who might avoid telling the commander about problems in his civilian work force in order to avoid the extra burden of having to fix them. An advisor independent of the civilian personnel system is the best choice.

### **DA Special Emphasis Program**

To further address the importance of civilian employees and their contributions, CSA should initiate an Armywide civilian awareness program similar to the effort in the 1970s that led to the successful integration of racial and gender minorities in the military and allows the annual celebration of racial, ethnic and gender differences through the DA Special Emphasis Program. A civilian appreciation week once a year would allow recognition of the myriad of talents and accomplishments that civilian employees bring to the workplace and that play a vital role in the accomplishment of the Army mission. Just as Women's History Week and Black History Month play an important role in increasing the awareness of soldiers about the unique contributions of women and African Americans to the military and to American society in general, so the celebration of the contributions of civilian employees within a specific organization and DA as a whole would gain attention for the importance of DACs to mission accomplishment.

The cost of such a program is minimal as the DA Special Emphasis Program already exists, and a civilian awareness week could be jointly sponsored by the Equal Opportunity (EO) and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) staff officers. The EO is a military member, and the EEO is a civilian, so it provides a perfect opportunity to design a program with meaning for both parts of the Army work force.

## Endnotes

1. Most of the officers we queried, both at the Army War College and at Harvard, indicated that in their experience supervising civilians begins at the captain level and extends through the field grade years. This means instruction should begin at least at the Advanced Course and continue through the Senior Service College. This outlook is further supported by the June 1990 Army Research Institute's *Technical Report 898, The Army Leader Requirements Task Analysis: Commissioned Officer Results* which lists various aspects of civilian personnel management as critical tasks for commissioned officers.
2. Henry O'Brien, Lieutenant Colonel, telephone interview, 1 Mar 1996.
3. US, Department of the Army, *Army Leader XXI Campaign Plan* (Version 6 - Draft - 5 Feb.1996), (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Leadership, 25 Jan. 1996) 32.

## Chapter 6. The Bottom Line

By public law and Department of Defense directive, the role of the Army is to conduct prompt and sustained operations on land. Within the Army that role is traditionally reformulated as "to fight and win the nation's wars."<sup>1</sup> To carry out this role the Army must integrate the uniformed forces, both active and reserve, and the civilian component. If we define culture as "the rituals, climate, values, and behaviors [that] bind [us] together in a coherent whole,"<sup>2</sup> the uniformed and civilian components appear, on the surface, to come from two completely different cultures. In some respects this may be true, but there are also large areas of overlap between the uniformed and civilian subcultures in the Army.

Looking at Army culture as a Venn diagram (Figure 6), with the uniformed subculture on the left and the civilian subculture on the right, we can see that they overlap in the middle. This middle area is an area of commonality -- an area which is very similar in both subcultures. Such attributes as identical oaths of office, similar performance evaluations, and centralized selection boards for senior service schools are a few examples of commonality. Functionally and operationally integrated civilian and military personnel systems will increase commonality and ultimately strengthen the bond between the uniformed and the civilian components.

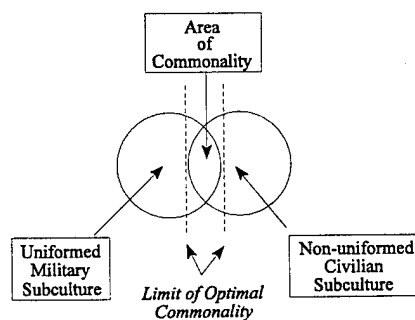


Fig. 6. Military and Civilian Overlap<sup>3</sup>

Of course there are limits to the commonality of these two subcultures. There are areas where it is an advantage to be a civilian and areas where it is an advantage to be military, and areas which will always be the exclusive right of one or the other. For example, only military members will carry weapons in offensive operations, and only civilians will be allowed to belong to unions. We must learn to value the differences between us and look at the total picture of the accomplishments we can achieve as a team, taking care to match one member's strength to alleviate another's weakness. This is where we most need to understand each other. If, as leaders, we do not develop a consciousness of the culture in which we are imbedded, the culture will manage us. While cultural understanding is desirable for everyone, it is vital to leaders if they are to lead.<sup>4</sup>

**To ensure the maximum commonality between military and civilian subcultures, we recommend the following long-term fundamental solutions:**

- Create functionally and operationally integrated military/civilian personnel management systems.
- Centralize and standardize selection, funding, and measurement of civilian education.
- Make GS-7 through 15 employees straight salary employees; centralize civilian pay at DA level.

**To implement our fundamental solutions, Chief of Staff Army should:**

- Direct a DAIG relook to officially assess the current status of civilian personnel management and progress on the 1986 DAIG recommendations.
- Appoint a General Officer Steering Committee to oversee the establishment of a demonstration project to design and implement integrated military and civilian personnel management systems which lead to the fundamental solutions we proposed.
- Continue the following on-going symptomatic solutions until the fundamental solutions are in place:

-- Integrate civilian personnel management into officer education at all levels.

- Capitalize on officers' previous experience in leading civilians through repeat assignments to highly civilianized organizations.
- Create state of the art self-development courses and motivate officers to seek self-development in leading civilians.
- Appoint a Senior Civilian Advisor.
- Add civilian awareness to the DA Special Emphasis Program.

**To maximize effective leadership, management, and mentoring of civilian employees local leaders must:**

- Motivate young officers to learn about civilian personnel management.
- Evaluate officers' ability to lead/manage their entire work force on OERs and through CIPs.
- Properly select, schedule, and fund civilian training.
- Reward exceptional civilian performance.
- Execute timely evaluations of civilian employees.

In this paper we have tried to identify techniques for creating a better understanding of each other and for increasing areas of commonality at the same time that we celebrate the important differences between us. We believe that our recommended fundamental solutions will play a key role in increasing the commonality and the understanding of the differences. We hope our efforts will result in a more efficient, effective work force in America's Army trained and ready to fight and win the nation's wars.

## **Endnotes**

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2. Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Josey-Bass Inc., 1992) 10.

3. The original concept for this figure came from a briefing slide developed by Mr. Joseph E. Galbraith of the National Academy of Public Administration.

4. Schein, 15.

## **List of Acronyms**

<b>ACSIM</b>	Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management
<b>ACTEDS</b>	Army Civilian Training and Education Development System
<b>AMC</b>	Army Materiel Command
<b>AMSC</b>	Army Management Staff College
<b>ANCOC</b>	Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course
<b>ASA M&amp;RA</b>	Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
<b>BNCOC</b>	Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course
<b>BSB</b>	Base Support Battalion
<b>CAS3</b>	Combined Officers Staff Service School
<b>CEL</b>	Civilian Education Level
<b>CGSC</b>	Command and General Staff College
<b>CIP</b>	Command Inspection Program
<b>CONUS</b>	Continental United States
<b>CPM</b>	Civilian Personnel Management
<b>CPO</b>	Civilian Personnel Office
<b>CSA</b>	Chief of Staff Army
<b>CSM</b>	Command Sergeant Major
<b>DA</b>	Department of the Army
<b>DAC</b>	Department of the Army Civilian
<b>DAIG</b>	Department of the Army Inspector General
<b>DCSOPS</b>	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans
<b>DCSPER</b>	Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel
<b>DOD</b>	Department of Defense
<b>EEO</b>	Equal Employment Opportunity
<b>EO</b>	Equal Opportunity

<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>LEAD</b>	Leadership Education and Development Course
<b>MEL</b>	Military Education Level
<b>MER</b>	Management Employee Relations
<b>MQS</b>	Military Qualification Standards
<b>NCOER</b>	Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Record
<b>ODCSPER</b>	Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel
<b>OER</b>	Officer Evaluation Report
<b>OLE</b>	Organizational Leadership for Executives
<b>OJT</b>	On-the-job training
<b>O&amp;M</b>	Operations & Maintenance
<b>PCC</b>	Pre-command Course
<b>PLDC</b>	Primary Leader Development Course
<b>PME</b>	Personnel Management for Executives
<b>QSI</b>	Quality Step Increase
<b>SMA</b>	Sergeant Major of the Army
<b>SMEDP</b>	Senior Managers Executive Development Program
<b>TDA</b>	Table of Distribution and Allowances
<b>TDY</b>	Temporary Duty
<b>TRADOC</b>	Training and Doctrine Command
<b>TTHS</b>	Trainees, Transients, Holdees, and Students
<b>UCMJ</b>	Uniform Code of Military Justice



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